

The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

BULLETIN ONE HUNDRED FIVE

FALL, 1968

FREEDOM IN THE THOUGHT OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU by J. W. Cooke

There have been three basic concepts of freedom in the western intellectual tradition. First, freedom has been described as a result of certain favorable circumstances which enable an individual to behave as he wishes in pursuing his chosen interests. Men are free in this sense when they are exempt from the coercive power of other men or of institutions. External conditions are important in this idea of liberty because they can prevent or assist bodily movement, expand or diminish alternative opportunities for action, and encourage or discourage emotions or ideas that, in turn, encourage or discourage acting in certain ways. Liberty under law, that liberty which is a result of a government of laws, is a special variant of this idea of freedom. Liberty may also be, in the opinion of certain influential thinkers, acquired through a rigorous, self-induced change in the individual's mind, character, or personality. As a result of this new character, personality, or ability the individual is able to live according to an ideal or "moral law" of his own choosing. No circumstance, no external force, whether it be self or prison, can deprive a man of this kind of freedom. This idea of liberty is entirely compatible with being either a slave or a prisoner; indeed, it may be the slaveowner or the gaoler who is really enslaved. Third, freedom is sometimes viewed as a gift of God, a natural right, which all men possess even though this right may be affected, but never destroyed, by unfavorable circumstances or because men have not acquired the necessary knowledge or virtue.

Even the most inattentive reader of Henry David Thoreau is quickly aware of the Concord naturalist's preoccupation with the many meanings of freedom. Although Thoreau (perhaps wisely) never attempted a formal definition of this protean word, or its synonym liberty, he used the two terms frequently, and his numerous reflections upon business, religion, politics, and the peregrinations of his contemporaries (two legged and four legged) suggest a keen awareness of the many dimensions and ambiguities inherent in any consideration of the idea of liberty.



"I'll get him . . . he's in his Walden Pond at the moment."

Drawing by Ed Arno; reprinted, with permission, from the Saturday Review, Jan. 20, 1968.

The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Henry Beetle Hough, Edgartown, Mass., President; Robert Needham, Concord, Mass., Vice-President; and Walter Harding, State University, Geneseo, N. Y. 14454, Secretary-Treasurer. Annual membership, \$2.00; life membership, \$50.00. Address communications to the secretary.

Looking about him, Thoreau despairingly concluded that most nineteenth century Americans were not free men, and were not even conscious of their deprivation. "The American," he lamented, has dwindled into an Odd Fellow,—one who may be known by the development of his organ of gregariousness, and a manifest lack of intellect and cheerful self-reliance; whose first and chief concern, on coming into the world, is to see that the Almshouses are in good repair....

Even granting that Americans were politically free (which Thoreau doubted) of what value was this when they were still morally enslaved? "What is it to be free from King George and continue the slaves of King Prejudice?" Perhaps the grandchildren of the present generation would be truly free. There were several reasons for this sad state of affairs. The government of the country was tyrannous, actively working to usurp the citizen's liberties. Only the "character of the American people" preserved some few remnants of American freedom. Thoreau darkly warned that "we have used up all our inherited

freedom. If we would save our lives we must fight for them." He was equally suspicious of other American institutions, especially the press and the church. "Probably" no other country on earth ever had been "so ruled by so mean a class of tyrants as, with a few noble exceptions, are the editors of the periodical press in this country." Even though the newspapers were willing enough to criticize the government, they were afraid to speak plainly about "Sunday and the Bible." He complained that "they /the

newspapers/ have been bribed to keep dark. They are in the service of hypocrisy." As for the church, the state, and the school, within them he found only "the freedom of the prison-yard." (1)

The cares of family, property, and business also diminished the liberties of too many Americans. Even in this comparatively free country, Thoreau thought, most men were so preoccupied with the "factitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life" that they had no time for its finer moments. Laborers (with no leisure for "a strict and lofty integrity day by day"), business men (who practiced a "negation of life"), the farmer ("content as an ox in his yard chewing the cud")—none could afford to be truthful, honest, and free. As

for the clergy, "What great interval is there between him who is caught in Africa and made a plantation slave in the South, and him who is caught in New England and made a Unitarian minister of?" Thoreau asked. "In course of time they will abolish the one form of servitude, and, not long after, the other." Even men's possessions, their tools, flocks, and herds had turned upon their owners and enslaved them. "I am wont to think that men are not so much the keepers of herds as herds are keepers of men, the former are so much the freer." He admonished in his Journal that "what we want is not mainly to colonize Nebraska with free men, but to colonize Massachusetts with free men,--to be free ourselves...."(2)

Men were still the slaves of custom, habit, and prejudice. "Circumstances," Thoreau wrote to H.G.O. Blake, "are not rigid and unyielding, but our habits are rigid." He commented on another occasion that "all men are partially buried in the grave of custom, and of some we see only the crown of the head above ground. Better are the physically dead, for they more lively rot. Even virtue is no longer such if it be stagnant." Another, more subtle, form of coercion which diminished man's freedom Thoreau called "our own private opinion." It was bad, he asserted, to have a Southern overseer and worse to have a Northern one, "but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself." At other times Thoreau suggested that the influence of the unconscious, the past, parents, diet, occupation, climate, the condition of one's bowels ("as are your bowels, so are the stars"), and some vague, undefined "essential and innate difference between man and man," might affect the individual's liberty. The transcendentalist philosopher also asserted his own version of the law of compensation. On more than one occasion he warned his fellow Americans that a nation which inflicted the smallest injustice upon one of its citizens would inexorably pay a heavy penalty. Finally, he conceded that "a man is wise with the wisdom of his time only, and ignorant with its ignorance."(3)

Nature, although never explicitly defined in Thoreau's writings, played a significant part in his concept of freedom. It was to this source that the Concord mystic turned when human society became tyrannous and unbearable. "I love Nature," he wrote in his Journal,

because she is not man, but a retreat from him. None of his institutions control or pervade her. There a different kind of right prevails. In her midst I can be glad with an entire gladness. If this world were all man, I could not stretch myself, I should lose all hope. He is constraint, she is freedom to me.

Such an intimate association with Nature afforded a "road to a new life and freedom" for Thoreau. Here he could find a saving "absolute freedom and wildness" which contrasted unfavorably with "a freedom and culture merely civil...."(4)

Despite occasional moments of pessimism ("At present the vast majority of men, whether black or white, require the discipline of labor which enslaves them for their good."), Thoreau consistently asserted the ability of men to become truly free individuals. "I learned this, at least, by my experiment," he wrote in the Conclusion to Walden, "that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours." And again, in a letter to H. G. O. Blake: "The principal, the only thing a man makes is his condition, or fate." He asserted that "a man is not his hope nor

his despair, nor his past deed. We know not yet what we have done, still less what we are doing." No demand made by society, or by his fellow men for that matter, need be considered binding by the individual, a possessor of "inalienable rights of reason and conscience," if he really wished to have his liberty. "The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right." The basis for this extraordinary assertion was a "higher law" which, once discovered, became an imperative for the individual, making him, in a sense, lawless; i.e., not bound by ordinary, man-made laws and institutions. For the man realizing the full import of the word freedom, Thoreau wrote Orestes Brownson, there was only a responsibility to that "Reason of which he is a particle, for his thought and his actions." Such an obligation to Reason (the oversoul) would give man a freedom "proportionate to the dignity of his nature." He would be freed from a bondage to business, politics, the periodical press, and the dead forms of religion, and free to follow his presumably divine intuitions. Man, Thoreau asserted in his Journal, "is superior to all laws, both of heaven and earth, when he takes his liberty."(5)

Thoreau's thought always had as its aim "the most complete realization of the perfectibility innate in every person." As he once wrote in his Journal, "All men, indeed, are divine in their core of light." Thus he was impelled to criticize and condemn the decrepit institutions, the ignorance, and the prejudice which shackled his fellow Americans and prevented them from realizing their God-given freedom. And, on a more mundane plane, Thoreau recommended the simple life of the philosopher--a little day labor, a little farming, a little surveying, a little pencil making--as a means to an integrated self culture which would result in true freedom. "It is glorious," he exulted, "to consider how independent man is of all enervating luxuries; and the poorer he is in respect to them, the richer he is."(6)

In one respect Thoreau's idea of liberty was quite traditionally American. Like most of his articulate contemporaries, he agreed that liberty consisted, in part, in being exempt from the external coercive power of other men or of institutions. Freedom from the constraints of one particular institution--government--loomed extraordinarily large in Thoreau's mind. And, he agreed that there ought to be at least a minimum number of liberties that were inviolable. When combined, these two ideas constitute what the English philosopher Isaiah Berlin has called the "negative" concept of liberty.

This "negative" idea of freedom, however, was only partly acceptable to the majority of antebellum Americans. They ordinarily viewed with understanding and approval most attempts to manipulate circumstances in order to enhance the scope of individual liberty. When the question of man's inalienable right to freedom came up, however, they were more equivocal. Such an idea seemed rather dangerous, perhaps an invitation to disorder, anarchy, and even revolution. Thoreau's generation has been aptly described as both "progressively democratic" and "anti-revolutionary." It was thus led to blur the fundamental distinction between constitutionally guaranteed liberties and man's unalienable right to freedom, and to tacitly consign the latter idea to obscurity and oblivion. Thoreau, on the other hand, continued to affirm both the idea of liberty as exemption from grievous external coercion and liberty as every man's

birthright. Paradoxically, he was, at one and the same time, both a conservative and a radical thinker: conservative in the sense that his idea of freedom was in the tradition of the "Great Generation," radical in the sense that he affirmed a potentially revolutionary idea, man's natural right to liberty, at a time when this idea was regarded as embarrassing, unnecessary, and dangerous. And, in his verbal onslaughts on government Thoreau reached heights (or depths) which Jefferson and Adams would have considered paranoid.(7)

"You fail in your thoughts, or you prevail in your thoughts only" Thoreau wrote to H. G. O. Blake in 1859. Here, and in similar passages, the transcendental philosopher argued that men could make themselves free through a conscious redirection of their thoughts and their character. This idea of liberty, stressing as it did the manipulation of states of mind instead of the environment, was distinctly a minority view in the antebellum republic. For various reasons, not many Americans chose to ignore or minimize the influence of external conditions upon their freedom. The will played a quite prominent part in antebellum thought but it was principally conceived as a device to steel the individual for struggle with a difficult and challenging environment. It was seldom defined as a means to induce detachment from the passions and fatuities of the world. Perhaps this was only Thoreau's "habit of a realist"; i.e., to state his perceptions in the form of a paradox. Or, perhaps because he was a self-acknowledged mystic, philosopher, and transcendentalist, Thoreau found the divine intuitions of the Reason more liberating than the solid and prosaic entities of the Understanding. At this point Thoreau's idea of liberty momentarily converged once again with more traditional concepts. Just as Charles G. Finney, for example, found that his faith gave him a "Christian liberty," so Thoreau found a precious liberty in union with the oversoul. But the resemblance was more superficial than fundamental. Finney seems to have meant that freedom was to be gained when the sinner submitted his will entirely to the will of God: "It seems to me," he wrote, "that I can find God within me, in such a sense, that I can rest upon him and be quiet, lay my heart in his hand, and nestle down in his perfect will, and have no carefulness or anxiety." For Thoreau, however, there could be no nestling down, no rest and comfort on the bosom of Jehovah; rather, following one's intuitions meant a stiffening of the spine, the development of a will strong enough to successfully resist the blandishments of the senses. "The noble life," he admonished, "is continuous and unremitting." Yet it was also a truly free one.(8)

The word liberty, Carl Becker once remarked, was a "kind of conceptual Gladstone bag which, with a little manipulation, can be made to accommodate almost any collection of social facts we may wish to carry about in it." For Thoreau, however, it was a word of many but fairly definite uses. It meant, first of all, a gift from God, a natural right which all men possessed simply because they were men, and "divine in their core of light." It also meant freedom in much the same sense that the idea had been used by Thomas Jefferson: freedom of thought and opinion, freedom of occupation (or, as Thoreau might have amended it, freedom for no occupation), and a freedom from the pressures of government. And, Thoreau also thought that a significant liberty might be achieved through "the unquestionable ability of

man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor." Thoreau's uses of this difficult and ambiguous term, then, represent a combination of traditional and original elements. He accepted with no apparent reservations the traditional categories in which any discussion of liberty in this country was carried on, but revised, deepened, and discarded on occasion those elements he believed to be either trivial or irrelevant to his own transcendental perceptions and intuitions. (9)

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Brooks Atkinson, ed., Walden and Other Writings of Henry David Thoreau (The Modern Library; New York, 1937, 1950), pp. 642, 727-28, 636, 677, 671; hereinafter cited as Atkinson; Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen, eds., The Journal of Henry David Thoreau (14 vols.; Boston, 1927, 1929), X, 290; XI, 324-25; hereinafter cited as J. Italics in the original.
- (2) Atkinson, pp. 5-6; J. I, 381-82; IV, 162; XIV, 260; IX, 284; Atkinson, p. 50; J., VI, 367.
- (3) Thoreau to H. G. O. Blake, March 27, 1848, in Walter Harding and Carl Bode, eds., The Correspondence of Henry David Thoreau (Washington Square, N.Y., 1958), p. 214; hereinafter cited as C.; Henry David Thoreau, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, Vol. I of The Writings of Henry David Thoreau (Boston and New York, 1893), p. 170; hereinafter cited as Week; Atkinson, p. 7; J., XIII, 22; X, 251-52; IV, 486.
- (4) Ibid., IV, 445; Thoreau to Thomas Chalmers, October 20, 1856, in C., p. 436; Atkinson, p. 597. Italics in the original.
- (5) J., V, 411; Atkinson, p. 288; Thoreau to H.G. O. Blake, May 20, 1860, C., p. 579; Week, p. 166; J., XIV, 292; Atkinson, p. 637; J., II, 171; Thoreau to Orestes Brownson, December 30, 1837, C., p. 20; J., II, 171.
- (6) Leo Stoller, "Thoreau's Doctrine of Simplicity," in Thoreau: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Sherman Paul (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1962), p. 37; J., I, 382; XIV, 259.
- (7) Carl Becker, The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas (New York, 1922), p. 237.
- (8) Thoreau to H. G. O. Blake, September 26, 1859, C., p. 558; Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Thoreau," in The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson (5 vols.; New York and London, 1914), III, 399; Rev. Charles G. Finney, Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney Written By Himself, (New York, 1876), p. 381; J., I, 385. Italics in the original.
- (9) Carl Becker, Modern Democracy (New Haven, 1941), p. 4; Atkinson, p. 81.

FAVORITE QUOTATIONS FROM THOREAU:

"If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."--WALDEN.

"All I can say is that I live and breathe and have my thoughts."--JOURNAL for 1850.

"I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion."--"Civil Disobedience."

"The landscape lies far and fair within, and the deepest thinker is the farthest traveled."

Send in your own favorite quotations from Thoreau for use here. It would help if you would identify the source of the quotation.

THOREAU IN GERMAN CRITICISM: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
by James F. Lacey

I. Thoreau in Early Surveys of American Literature

Karl Knortz, Geschichte der Nordamerikanischen Literatur (Berlin, 1891), I, 283-293. Characterizes Thoreau as a vehement abolitionist. Though dubious about what he takes to be Thoreau's escapism, Knortz admires Thoreau's practical ideas, such as his views on education. Calls attention to Thoreau as a critic of society and concludes that his writings will be considered among the classics of American literature.

Eduard Engel, Geschichte der englischen Litteratur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Mit einem Anhang: Die nordamerikanische Litteratur, 4th ed. (Leipzig, 1897), p. 529. Considers Thoreau a New England version of Rousseau or Diogenes and a political nihilist, less important, as a writer, than Margaret Fuller.

Leon Kellner, Geschichte der nordamerikanischen Literatur (Berlin, 1913), I, 63-77. Places Thoreau in the camp of Melville and Whitman as a "primitive" writer and argues that he went to the pond because of mundane concerns rather than transcendental convictions. Admires Thoreau's verse, but attacks the didactic bent in Walden. (1)

II. Early Studies of Thoreau Specifically

Heinrich Noé, "Henry David Thoreau," Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung, No. 116 (May 18, 1892), pp. 1-5. The earliest German essay on Thoreau characterizes Walden as a book of ideas related in spirit to the novels of Jean Paul Richter.

A. Prinzing, d/er J/unger, Henry D. Thoreau, ein amerikanischer Naturschilderer (Salzburg, 1895). A brief monograph which impressionistically characterizes Thoreau's relation to nature. Relates Thoreau to the back-to-nature cult and calls attention to "Walking," "A Winter's Walk," and Thoreau's experiences in Maine.

A. von Ende, "Henry David Thoreau," Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung, No. 197 (August 26, 1896), pp. 1-3. Celebrates the fact that Thoreau, like Whitman, actually practiced individualism, unlike most Americans, who tend to be individualists in theory only. Calls attention to Thoreau's opposition to majority views and considers him the greatest writer among the Transcendentalists and the most original and powerful personality in American literature.

Karl Knortz, Ein amerikanischer Diogenes. Henry D. Thoreau (Hamburg, 1899). A brief monograph in two sections; the first section celebrates Thoreau's attack on the shams of society and Christianity; the second relates his life and ideas to those of Goethe, Zimmermann, Christ, Nietzsche, Faust, et. al. A wild and often irrelevant exercise in critical broken-field running.

Karl Federn, Essays zur amerikanischen Litteratur (Halle an der Saale, 1899). This book about American Transcendentalism devotes its final chapter to Thoreau. Like Knortz, Federn is enthusiastic about Thoreau's attack upon the conventional wisdom. Though Federn's viewpoint is basically the same, his discussion is much more succinct.

Josef Hofmiller, "Thoreau," in Versuche (Munich, 1909), pp. 130-165. Calls attention once again to Thoreau's dissatisfaction with the complexities of modern civilization. A competent and unusually colorful essay on Thoreau, which emphasizes Thoreau's abolitionist sentiments and activities. Relates Thoreau's civil disobedience to Separatist theology. Thoreau's personality, he suggests, is essentially tense like that of the Indian hunters who walked the forests before him--restless, frugal, proud, and silent.

Franz Strunz, "Naturgefühl und Naturerkenntnis bei Henry David Thoreau," in Beiträge und Skizzen zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften (Hamburg, 1909), pp. 173-185. Characterizes Thoreau's transcendental approach to natural science, yet admires his ability to record precise observations. Though prone to howlers and plagiarism himself, Strunz notes that Thoreau was not a competent researcher.

_____. "Das Fortschrittliche und Neue im Naturgefühl bei Henry David Thoreau," Dokumente des Fortschritts (March 1910), pp. 203-208. Though I have not seen this article, Eugene F. Timpe's comments (TSB: Fall, 1965) suggest that Strunz further emphasizes Thoreau's Transcendentalism and his relation to Kant.

III. German Dissertations on Thoreau

Helena A. Snyder, Thoreau's Philosophy of Life with Special Consideration of the Influence of Hindoo Philosophy (Heidelberg, 1902). Written in English, this dissertation appears to be the first extensive treatment of Thoreau's relation to Oriental thought. Though of historical interest on this account, it is superficial and un-historical in regard to its "special consideration." Most interesting and original is Snyder's discussion of Thoreau's idealism, which convincingly ties together his civil disobedience, his curious notions about love and friendship, his negative attitude toward reform movements, and even his comments on music.

Helga Innerhofer, "Henry David Thoreau, Seine Stellung zu seiner Zeit zu Mensch und Natur," unpub. diss. (Innsbruck, 1951). An enthusiastic and innocent discussion of Thoreau's personality, without focus. Relies heavily on Canby's biography in a number of essay-like chapters which cover almost everything about Thoreau in no great depth.

Klaus Becker, "Der Stil in den Essays von H. D. Thoreau," unpub. diss. (Marburg, 1952). Rather mystically equates an "inner form" in Thoreau's writing with his world view. Most interesting is Becker's discussion of Thoreau's theoretical statements about writing in relation to his actual practice. Argues that Thoreau's vocabulary is more traditional and less "American" than has generally been supposed. Covers all of Thoreau's writings; emphasizes Walden.

Karl-Joachim Zwanzig, "Henry David Thoreau als Kritiker der Gesellschaft," unpub. diss. (West Berlin, 1956). A rigorous and systematic study of Thoreau's social thought. Calls attention to the importance of Thoreau's journals in any consideration of Thoreau's criticism of society. According to Zwanzig, Thoreau's social philosophy is a natural outgrowth of his attempt to lead a satisfactory life. The key to Thoreau's social thought is his attitude toward reform. Thoreau was often opposed to reform movements because they violated individualism even though they were rooted in idealism. Argues that the mature Thoreau was led to a position more radical than civil disobedience and that he became increasingly concerned with the welfare of society at large.

IV. Essays and Articles on Thoreau Since 1920
Paul Westphal, "Thoreau als Befrier," Die Tat, XII (1920), 501-506. Suggests that Thoreau's social principles could be of help to the German people in the aftermath of World War I.

O. E. Lessing, Bruecken über den Atlantik: Beiträge zum amerikanischen und deutschen Geistesleben (Berlin, 1927), pp. 69-75. Portrays Thoreau as a gemütlich, good-humoured, and industrious burgher and attacks the clichés which characterize Thoreau as a Yankee-Stoic or a latter-day St. Francis of Assisi. Suggests Thoreau's Walden sojourn was a sentimental and

unnecessary prank.

Edgar Maass, "Thoreau," Das Innere Reich, VI (June 1939), 310-334. Argues that Thoreau, in his attack upon the almighty dollar and technological encroachments upon the individual, developed revolutionary anti-capitalistic ideas. Emphasizes Thoreau's Heimatgefühl and his admiration for the defeated yet proud Indian race.

Fritz Krökel, "Der gerade Weg des H. D. Thoreau," Der Speicher (1948), pp. 93-117. Stresses Thoreau's protest against the tyranny of the majority and the eclecticism of his religious views.

Walther Fischer, "Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) der Dichter des 'Walden-Sees' (1854)," Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen, CLXXXVI (Sept. 1949), 28-48. A general introduction to Thoreau's life and thought.

C.R.B. Combella, "Marx und Thoreau," Die Amerikanische Rundschau, VI (Dec. 1949-Jan. 1950), 21-26. Argues that the contrast between the ideas of Marx and Thoreau is precisely that which divides the world today into two camps. Suggests that Thoreau was the more radical of the two thinkers, since he did not accept an economic system based upon modern technology.

Johannes Urzidil, "Adalbert Stifter und Henry Thoreau," Welt und Wort, V (1950), 225. Suggests that Thoreau was directly influenced by Stifter's Hochwald (1842).

Anna Ozana, "Varianten des 'einfachen Lebens' von Henry D. Thoreau bis Ernst Wiechert," Welt und Wort, VIII (1953), 145-149. Distinguishes and criticizes the primitivism of writers like Thoreau, D. H. Lawrence, Hemingway, and Ernst Wiechert, a German contemporary of Hemingway. Wiechert, the critic feels, represents a decadent and meaningless protest against civilization as opposed to Thoreau's sound principles.

Johannes Urzidil, "Weltreise in Concord," Neue literarische Welt, May 10, 1953, p. 8. Again calls attention to the resemblance between Thoreau and Stifter.

Stefan Andres, "Henry David Thoreau: Der Eremit von Walden Pond," Perspektiven, III (#10, 1954-55), 52-71. A general survey of Thoreau's life and his work; Andres, whose frame of reference is scholastic philosophy and Christian mysticism, characterizes Thoreau as a radical nominalist.

Johannes Urzidil, "Henry David Thoreau oder Natur und Freiheit," Castrum Peregrini, XXX (1956), 13-31. An appreciation of Thoreau which lyrically describes his relation to nature and praises his Walden sojourn, his civil disobedience, and his abolitionism.

Sreekrishna Sarma, "A Short Study of Oriental Influence upon H. D. Thoreau with Special Reference to Walden," Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien, I (1956), 76-92. Argues that from an Indian point of view Thoreau may be considered a Jñānayogi, i.e., a Yogi whose path is intellectual rather than emotional. In addition Sarma discerns in Thoreau traces of Karmayoga, the path of action.

Ernst Schlick, "Ein Held der Vereinigten Staaten," Zeitschrift für Geopolitik, XXX (#5, 1959), 7-9. Emphatically calls attention to the value of civil disobedience in the modern world; suggests Thoreau's influence on Gandhi.

Seymour Flaxman, "Thoreau and Van Eeden," in Der Friede: Idee und Verwirklichung, ed. Erich Fromm and others (Heidelberg, 1961), pp. 341-352. Describes a social experiment in Holland conducted by Frederik van Eeden, an admirer of Thoreau. (2)
V. German Translations of Thoreau

Emma Emmerich, tr., Walden (Munich: Johann Palm's Verlag, 1897). The earliest translation of Walden

into a foreign language, and in its second edition (Munich: Verlag Concord, n.d.) the most accurate of the German translations. Prefaced by a well-balanced and intelligent essay, Emmerich's translation attempts to render the difficulties of Thoreau's text, his wit, and his characteristic style. Third editions of this translation were apparently published by two separate firms, Loschwitz of Dresden and Menzel of Baden-Baden.

_____, Winter, Gedanken und Stimmungsbilder. Den nachgelassenen Werken Thoreaus entnommen (Munich: Concord Verlag, 1900). Emmerich's selections from Thoreau's journals include entries from winter months on a day-by-day basis. Oddly, she does not mention H.G.O. Blake's Winter (1897), upon which her translation is modeled. The fact that this book went through two further printings, Darmstadt: Peters, 1901, and Paderborn: Lucus, 1921, indicates that it gained a reading public.

Wilhelm Nobbe, tr., Walden, oder Leben in den Wäldern (Jena and Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1905). Tends to simplify and at times interpret Thoreau's text, particularly in relatively difficult passages. Nobbe's substantial introduction refers to a variety of secondary sources including Salt, Lowell, Ellery Channing, Burroughs, and Bradford Torrey.

Gerhard Gutherz, tr., Thoreaus Worte (Minden: Bruns, 1909), I could not locate a copy of this book in West Germany; Walter Harding, who has a copy, describes the book as a selection of quotations from Thoreau's works.

Franz Meyer, tr., Walden, Ein Leben in den Wäldern (Berlin: O. Hendel, 1922). Tends to simplify and qualify Thoreau's text for the sake of clarity. Reissued (Weimar: Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag, 1964) without mention of the earlier edition.

Siegfried Lang, tr., Walden (Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1945). The most accurate and the most satisfactory of the post-war translations of Walden.

Paul Pattloch, tr., Über die Freundschaft (Aschaffenburg: n.p., 1946). From the "Wednesday" chapter of Thoreau's A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.

Agusta B. Brenner, tr., Einfachheit und höhere Gesetze (Vienna, 1947). Brief selections from Walden.

Bertha Engler and Ernst Frey, trs., Herbst, Aus dem Tagebuch von Henry David Thoreau (Zurich: Buchergilde Gutenberg, 1947). A translation of H.G.O. Blake's Autumn (1891).

Anneliese Dengel, tr., Walden, oder Leben in den Wäldern (Leipzig: Dieterich'schen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1949). A free translation which, despite fortunate and precise phrases, does not suggest Thoreau's sentence sense or the texture of his style. Includes an introduction by Walther Fischer and selections from "Civil Disobedience" and "Life without Principle."

Fritz Krökel, tr., Wofür Ich Lebte (Munich, 1950). Brief selection from Walden.

_____, Die Welt und Ich (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Verlag, 1951). Combines biographical material with selections from A Week, Walden, The Maine Woods, a variety of essays, and Thoreau's letters and journals. In this fine anthology Krökel provides the German student with the essence of Thoreau.

Widerstand gegen die Regierung (Hamburg, 1959). A 26-page translation from "Civil Disobedience" issued by the Aktionkreis für Gewaltlosigkeit.

Erika Ziha, tr., Leben, ein unversuchtes Experiment, "Walden" (Vienna and Munich: Manutiuspresse, 1961). A re-write of Thoreau's text according to modern journalistic standards. Ziha reproduces expressions

characteristic of Lang's translation. The sixth translation of Walden is the most "readable" and the least accurate.

FOOTNOTES

(1) Two additional surveys of American literature should be mentioned as perhaps having had an influence on German views of Thoreau although they were written by American university professors on leave and have never been mentioned in any subsequent discussion of Thoreau: Ewald Flügel's Geschichte der amerikanischen Literatur (Leipzig, 1907) and Alphonso Smith's Die amerikanische Literatur (Berlin, 1912).

(2) Book reviews of Thoreau material include F. Hillig, S. J.'s "Über die Freundschaft: Essays von Henry D. Thoreau," Stimmen der Zeit, CXL (1947), 239, and Horst Oppel's "Sherman Paul, The Shores of America: Thoreau's Inward Exploration," Die Neuren Sprachen, VIII (1959), 341-343. Hillig, in a review of Pattloch's translation of the "Wednesday" chapter of A Week, suggests that Thoreau's views of friendship are not in conformity with Christian doctrine; Oppel argues that Thoreau was influenced more by his own generation and less by medieval and renaissance thinkers than Sherman Paul acknowledges.

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY WH

- Anderson, Charles R. THE MAGIC CIRCLE OF WALDEN. Review. NEW REPUBLIC. Sept. 14, 1968.
- Bailey, Herbert S., Jr. "Thoreau Changed the World—and the World Changed Him." UNIVERSITY: A PRINCETON QUARTERLY, XXXVIII (Fall, 1968), 15-19.
- Bemis, Samuel Flagg. "Alum Pond and Walden." NEW ENGLAND GALAXY, X (Summer, 1968), 12-16. Compares Alum Pond in Sturbridge, Mass., to Walden.
- Blackford, Frank. "What Thoreau Started." [Norfolk] VIRGINIA PILOT. Dec. 4, 1967. On "Civil Disobedience."
- Bryant, Nelson. "Thoreau's 'Golden Plover' Is Missing as Walden Undergoes Reclamation." NEW YORK TIMES. Sept. 26, 1968. Gives details of how Mass. Fish & Game Commission recently killed off all the fish in Walden Pond in order to stock it with game fish. Shades of Henry Thoreau!
- CONCORD FREE PRESS. "Thoreau Society Hears Well-Known Writer on 'Science vs Technology.'" July 18, 1968. Report on annual meeting.
- CONCORD JOURNAL. "Thoreau Society Annual Meeting." July 18, 1968.
- Crocket, Douglas. "Walden's Shrunk Since 1850." BOSTON GLOBE. Sept. 30, 1968. Report on investigation of Walden by the New England Marine Technology Society.
- Dietz, Lew. THE ALLEGISH. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968. Includes a chapter on Thoreau in the Maine Woods which is also published as "A Man to Remember" in DAWN EAST, XIV (June, 1968), 44-5, 70-78.
- Dryer, Stan. "Dear Mr. Thoreau." SATURDAY EVENING POST. Oct. 5, 1968. A delightful little satire on Thoreau's troubles with publishers if he tried to publish WALDEN today. Don't miss it.
- Ellison, Harlan. "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," in Damon Knight, ed., NEBULA AWARD STORIES. New York: Pocket Books, pp. 53-64. A science fiction story based on Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" and which won the Nebula Award as the best science fiction short story of 1965.
- Griswold, Erwin H. "Dissent—1968 Style" TULANE LAW REVIEW, XLII (June, 1968), 726. Includes a strong denunciation of Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" by the current United States Solicitor General.
- Hackett, Peter. "Historic Sidelights." BLACKSTONE VALLEY NEWS TRIBUNE [Whitinsville, Mass.], May 24, 1967. An essay on Thoreau on Cape Cod.
- . "Thoreau Loved Cape Cod's Majestic Beauty, Walked Most of It." BLACKSTONE VALLEY NEWS TRIBUNE. July 10, 1968.
- Harding, Walter. "A Thoreauvian in Europe." INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL & CULTURAL EXCHANGE, IV (Summer, 1968), 1-5.
- Helfer, Harold. "Honorable Confucius Computer Data." AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE. Aug. 1968. Humorous poem on Thoreau.
- Houriham, Paul. "The Inner Dynamics of the Emerson-Thoreau Relationship." DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS XXVIII (1967).
- Lundquist, James. "An Apology for Henry." NATIONAL REVIEW. August 13, 1968. pp. 806, 819.
- McAleer, John J. "Thoreau's Epic 'Cape Cod'" THOUGHT, XLIII (Summer, 1968), 227-246. The first extended scholarly evaluation of CAPE COD.
- Murray, James G. HENRY DAVID THOREAU. New York: Wash. Sq. Press, 1968. 180pp. 75¢. A volume in the "Great American Thinkers" series. Billed as a biography of Thoreau's mind, it does analyze his thought, but fails to trace its development. Because he feels WALDEN and "Civil Disobedience" are "too familiar," he instead concentrates on such fugitive pieces as "Sir Walter Raleigh." Generally it is a sensitive appraisal, though it tends to over-formalize Thoreau's thought. And as is the case with virtually all critics of Thoreau, his words seem prosaic when set against the vibrant phraseology of Thoreau.
- NEWS FRONT [New York City]. "The Gentle Rebel of Walden." MII (April, 1968), 36-39.
- Ogata, Toshihiko. "The Influence of the Oriental Scriptures on WALDEN." REV. OF ENG. LIT. [Kyoto Univ.], LX (March 20, 1967), 125-171. Text in Japanese.
- Reid, Mark. "Fish in the Sky" in Charles Cropsey & Jill Browner, ed. THE SHAMELESS NUDE. Los Angeles: Elysium, 1968. pp. 112-119. A spoof with Thoreau in a mental hospital being interviewed by psychiatrists.
- Ruland, Richard. THE REDISCOVERY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE. Cambridge: Harvard, 1967. Includes extended commentary on the criticisms of Thoreau by Matthiessen and P.E. More.
- Salt, Henry S. LIFE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books [SheeString Press], 1968. 208pp. \$5.75. At last this best of all early biographies, which has been out of print and almost impossible to find, is now readily available in a facsimile reprint.
- Schridtchen, Paul W. "Rugged Individualist." MOBILES. August, 1968.
- Semmens, Frank. "Thoreau's Changing Attitudes: a Study of Metaphor and Meaning in WALDEN." Unpublished M.A. thesis. State Univ. of N.Y. at Oswego, 1968.
- Strauch, Carl F. "Emerson Rejects Reed and Hails Thoreau." HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN, XVI (July 1968), 257-273.
- Thoreau, Henry David. "Civil Disobedience." Caedmon Records TC1263. 1968. [Distrib. by Houghton Mifflin, \$5.95]. Read by Archibald MacLeish. MacLeish reads in a quiet, unpretentious, clearly enunciated voice which

glosses over some of the stridency of Thoreau's volatile essay.

----. "Nei Boschi di Walden." VOLONTA [Pistoia, Italy], XXI (Jan., 1968), 21-4. Text in Italian from WALDEN.

----. WALDEN & THE ESSAY ON CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. New York: Lancer Books [1560 Broadway], 1968. 445pp. A "Magnum Easy Eye Book," printed in exceptionally large type for a paperback and on light green "easy to read" paper. 75¢. The only such large type paperback edition available. Vazquez Amaral, Jose. "Henry David Thoreau." Paris: Unbral. May, 1968. Text in Spanish.

We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: W. Austin, H. Adel, T. Bailey, A. Brooks, K. Bailey, D. Boisvert, M. Campbell, C. Collins, K. Cameron, J. Donovan, R. Epler, R. Ganley, P. Gates, H. Gottschalk, P. Hourihan, P. Hackett, C. Hoagland, D. Hannan, D. Karen-Maye, K. Kasegawa, A. Kovar, V. Munoz, F. Oliver, L. Richardson, F. Semmens, L. Simon, J. Troy, J. Vickers, and R. Wheeler. Please keep the secretary informed of new Thoreau items as they appear and old ones he has missed.

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GHOST? WH

Francis M. Allen, in his *BIBLIOGRAPHY OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU* (Boston, 1908, p. 74) lists Thoreau's "Succession of Forest Trees" as appearing in the *NEW YORK DAILY TRIBUNE* for October 6, 1860. It does appear in the *NEW YORK WEEKLY TRIBUNE* for that date, but so far as I have been able to ascertain, it does not appear in the daily issue. I think we can assume then that Mr. Allen inadvertently substituted "daily" for "weekly," and that a bibliographical ghost has thus come into existence. Any evidence to the contrary of this theory would be greatly appreciated.

THOREAU AT THE BOSTON MUSIC HALL, by W. Harding

On October 9, 1859, Thoreau lectured before Theodore Parker's religious society at the Music Hall in Boston, Mass., using as his text the lecture that was later to be published as "Life without Principle." A hitherto unnoticed review of that lecture was clipped out of some now unknown newspaper by Thoreau's friend Daniel Ricketson and pasted in his personal copy of *WALDEN* which is now in the Houghton Library of Harvard University. It reads:

BOSTON AND VICINITY.

Thoreau Talk. Henry D. Thoreau of Concord, the hermit of Walden Pond, and the model cynic of modern times, occupied the Music Hall platform yesterday, and for an hour and a half discoursed upon what he considers to be "Misspent Lives." Mr. Thoreau has a fine voice, and a prompt, effective style of oratory that fixes the attention of the hearer. The following are a few of his characteristic thoughts, selected at random: If a man walk in the woods half a day for the love of them, he is looked upon by the world as a loafer. If you would get money as a lecturer you must be popular; and if you would be popular you must go down perpendicularly.

The speaker several times alluded to his occupation of surveying. He found that men generally were in favor of a system of surveying which would give them the most land, rather than of a just sys-

tem. He had once proposed a system of measuring wood in Haymarket square, which was rejected for being quite accurate. Business men advertised for active young men, as though activity was the sole requisite. A man might be very industrious, and not spend his life well. To be born to a fortune was to be still-born. Some men were forever talking about the fall of man, and never making an effort to get up. Neither the New Testament or Poor Richard spoke of getting a living honorably, and at the same time making it inviting and glorious. Cold and hunger, said the speaker, is more friendly to my nature, than the modes adopted by men of getting a living. There was no wisdom not applicable to life. The way of most men was to make believe, and shirk the real business of life. This was called enterprise. The morality of such men was not worth the dust of a puff-ball. It made God a moneyed gentleman, scattering pennies to see men scramble after them. And yet the pulpits were silent--some of them because the preacher had gone to California. Satan took them up into a high mountain and showed them the kingdom of California. Did they say "Get thee behind me, Satan?" No; but "Go ahead;" and Satan had to hurry to get there first. The prophets of today were employed in excusing the ways of men. It would make men sick to know how their bread was buttered. We quarter our grass [sic] bodies upon our weak souls till the former eat up our substance. We do not worship truth, but the reflection of truth. Much of our boasted commerce was no better than juniper berries and bitter almonds. If land was found where carrots grew so long that they reached the other side of the earth, such land must be assiduously devoted to carrots, though we manikins that raise them tumble into the holes whence the carrots are extracted. The Chaplain of the House was only a wooden gun to scare the devil with, and was probably suggested by the devil himself. The speaker would not blunt his sense of right by reading political articles in the newspapers. He had not yet to answer for reading a single President's message. Newspapers were the ruling power. The President trying to be popular, and to do his duty, was bewildered. Government bent its knees to the man that refused to read the *Times*. Politics was the gizzard of society, and full of grit. The parties were its two sides which ground together to rid society of dyspepsia. The speaker once attempted before an audience to give an exposition of religion, but the audience never knew what he was saying. It was all moonshine to them. But if he had read the biographies of some of the greatest scamps in history, they would have thought he was reading the lives of the deacons of their church. The Kossuth hat was the only fruit of all the stir occasioned by the presence of the great Magyar in this country. They had had a sort of military picnic out to Concord. It was heralded by many trumpets; but the only impression left by it upon the mind of the speaker, was that the town was fuller of dust than ever before. It covered the fences, and bushes, and pads upon the river. He looked hard, but he could see nothing else. In conversation surface met surface. Men could tell nothing that had not been told them, or that they had not seen in the newspapers. As the inner life failed one, he went more and more constantly and desperately to the post office. Conventionalisms were as bad as impurities. A man had better starve at once, than lose his innocence in getting bread.

FREDERIC TUDOR AND WALDEN POND, by Walter Harding

One of the many highlights of Thoreau's WALDEN is his account of the harvesting of ice at the pond in the winter of 1847. As I pointed out in a footnote to my VARIORUM WALDEN:

Frederic Tudor, the "ice king" of the nineteenth-century New England ice industry, and his former partner, Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth, engaged in a trade war in the mid-1840's. Rather than be forced to buy ice from Wyeth, who had a monopoly of the sources, Tudor, who shipped ice all over the world, did his own harvesting at Walden Pond. When Tudor won the war, he had no need for the Walden ice, so it was left to melt on the shores of the pond.

I have recently run across an interesting document pertaining to Mr. Tudor's activities. An article in the BOSTON TRANSCRIPT for July 23, 1927, states that the document had then recently come to light in the files of the Fitchburg Railroad and had been framed and presented to Mr. George Hannauer then president of the railroad, who had placed it on the wall above his desk. Whether the document still exists, I do not know, but its text as recorded in the TRANSCRIPT states:

Memo agreement made this fifth day of February 1847. The Fitchburg Rail Road Company sell and convey to Frederic Tudor, all right, and title which they possess to land + water rights for taking Ice or otherwise on Walden Pond in the Town of Lincoln + Concord reserving only five Rods in width for the bed of the Rail Road-- In consideration of which said Tudor releases all demands upon said Rail Road Co. for gravel and land damage taken + caused by them at his Estate, at and near Fresh Pond West Cambridge say [sic] at Block Island, and also to pay said Corporation the sum of Three Hundred Dollars--It is understood that only two + one half rods of land shall be reserved East of the center of the present Rail Road track.

Frederic Tudor
Fitchburg Rail Road
Witness
R. C. Cabot
by Jacob Forster Pres.

LESLIE STEPHEN ON THOREAU

Leslie Stephen, the British critic of the turn of the century, in his book, HOURS IN A LIBRARY (New York: Putnam, 1907. IV, 132-3) has this rather negative comment to make about Thoreau:

"How bleak and comfortless a really natural country may be is apparent to the readers of Thoreau. He had all the will to become a part of nature, and to shake himself free from the various trammels of civilised life, and he had no small share of the necessary qualifications; but one cannot read his account of his life by Walden pond without a shivering sense of discomfort. He is not really acclimatised; so far from being a true child of nature, he is a man of theories, a product of the social state against which he tries to revolt. He does not so much relish the wilderness as to go out into the wilderness in order to rebuke his contemporaries. There is something harsh about him and his surroundings, and he affords an unconscious proof that something more is necessary for the civilised man who would become a true man of the woods than simply to strip off his clothes. He has got tolerably free from tailors; but he still lives in the intellectual atmosphere of Cambridge debating-rooms."

THOREAU'S INDIAN RELICS

As is generally known, Thoreau's own personal collection of Indian relics was given to the Boston Society of Natural History by his sister shortly after his death. Later it was turned over to the Peabody Museum at Harvard. The THIRD ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE PEABODY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY records that accession:

". . . The Boston Society of Natural History have deposited with this Museum a large series of Indian implements of stone from various parts of New England, but chiefly from the neighborhood of Concord, Mass. This collection was made by the late Henry D. Thoreau, of Concord. There are over one hundred specimens of axes, pestles, gouges, mortars, chisels, spear points, ornaments, etc. and a larger number of arrow points of very varied patterns and materials.

"The entire collection comprises about nine hundred pieces." (Pp. 6-7.)

About ten years ago this collection was transferred from the Peabody Museum to the Fruitlands Museum at Harvard, Mass.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Newest life member of the Thoreau Society is Yukinaka Kotera of Osaka, Japan. Life membership in the Thoreau Society is fifty dollars.

The August 30, 1968 issue of THE featured a full-page Container Corp. of America ad based on a quotation from Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience."

Leonard Kleinfeld (9526 67th Ave., Forest Hills, N.Y. 11374) writes that he has several extra copies of the German translation of WALDEN, with an after-piece by Erika Zinn, published in Wein by Manutius-presse in 1961, which he will sell for \$3.50.

Recent doctoral dissertations announced as "in progress" include "The Influence of Indian Philosophy on Henry David Thoreau" by Joseph M. Chervelil at the Univ. of Mississippi; "The Metaphysical Strain in 19th Century American Poetry: Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, and Emily Dickinson" by Karl Keller at the Univ. of Minnesota; "The Changing Image of Henry Thoreau: A Study of His Recent Reception" by Theodore Haddin at the Univ. of Michigan; and "The Impact of the Wild on Henry David Thoreau, Jack London, and Robinson Jeffers" by Jonathan Fairbanks at the Univ. of Otago in New Zealand.

THE MORNING AFTER DEATH, a detective story by Nicholas Blake (New York: Harper, 1966), includes a scene at Walden Pond. Blake is the pseudonym for C. Day Lewis, the British poet laureate, who several years ago spent an academic year at Harvard University and quite obviously visited Walden Pond when he was there.

Several years ago we ran a query as to the identity of the "plum cake" that Thoreau frequently recommended taking along as a provision on his "excursions." No one came up with a recipe, but Mrs. Maurice Kamen-Kaye of Cambridge, Mass., writes that according to several dictionaries "plums" in the mid-nineteenth century could also refer to raisins when used in a pudding or a cake.

Ralph Chapman of Brattleboro, Vermont, pointed out to me last summer that a girl by the name of Thoreau Elizabeth Raymond won several prizes for poetry in the old ST. NICHOLAS magazine back about 1930. He now writes that he has learned she was born in Bourne, Mass., on June 14, 1914. He wonders now of her present whereabouts. Can anyone help?